5 September 1950

Subject: State Police Investigation of "Oesterr.-Kontor" G.m.b.H., Graz, Operaring 18.

1. The firm "Oesterr.-Kontor" G.m.b.H. was founded on 13 November 1945 by the following persons:

Dr. Karl (von) Winckler, businessman in Schladming
Trude (von) Winckler, wife of Karl Winckler
Miss Trude (Von) Winckler, office employee, Schladming
Dr. Otto Kraft, businessman in Graz
Dr. Franz Fichler, industrialist in Fuggern/Enns
Martha Strehl, office employee, Fruggern/Enns
Dr. Erik Wintersberger, businessman in Koeflach
Hans Gessele, industrialist and vice-president of the Bundeswirtschaftskammer, resident of Salzburg

2. On 17 January 1946, the firm was recorded as export-import and transit firm in the Graz trde registry. The firm was founded with the intention of interesting important foreign business circles in trade with Austria and it was planned for certain foreign businessmen who made credits available to the firm to become partners (Gesellschafter) of the firm later on. The following foreign business agents are connected with the firm:

Mr. John Caffery, Bern, a representative of Hambros Bank, London. Mr. Caffery (or Mrs Caffery) was formerly a British diplomat and holds the rank of colonel in the British army. He is very interested in the economic reconstruction of Austria and has already joined the "Oesterr.-Kontor" as a partner.

Pedro Canellopoulo, Athens, partner in the Greek pyrite concern Canellopoulo.

Julien Krachling, a Paris lawyer and well known figure in the French Resistance.

Oxyda AG, a well-known Swiss trading firm.

3. The firm was registered on the strength of a license held by Otto Kraft (see para 1, above) who at first took an active part in running the firm. In view of his nazi past, he was persuaded to resign from the post of Gesellschaftsführer on 1 October 1946, and Wolfgang Boesch, a director of Schmechater Braeu, took his place. Kraft although has no longer any influence on the firm, which operates, however, still on the basis of Kraft's trade license.

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4. As an additional partner, Walter Koenig joined the firm later on; he owns a lumber trading firm and saving mill in St. Kathrein a./Lamming.

5. The following background information is submitted on the persons mentioned in the preceding paragraphs:

a. Dr. Karl von Winckler, born on 8 December 1918, businessman in Schladming, Hohenlehnstrasse 140. He held a nazi party function in Schladming already prior to 1938.

b. Gertrude Winckler, born on 18 May 1917, wife of Karl Winckler, was a member of the NS Frauenschaft 1936-38 and also a member of the ANSt (Arbeitsgemeinschaft nationalsozialistischer Studenten). According to a statement by Karl Winckler, his wife was a member of the NSDAP.

c. Gertrude Winckler, daughter of the above Gertrude Winckler; birth date unknown. No record of nazi activity.

d. Dr. Otto Kraft, born on 26 August 1901, businessman residing in Graz, Leechgasse 2 (office: Operring 18); member of the NSDAP since 1931, of the SA since 1931, of the NSKK since 1938. On 18 December 1947 he was sentenced by a Vienna People's Court for violation of para 8 of the War Crimes Law to one year in prison.

e. Dr. Franz Fiehler, industrialist in Pruggern/Enns; further data unknown. He left the firm "Oesterr.-Kanter" some time ago.

f. Miss Berta Strobl, born in Vienna, teacher, residing in Pruggern/Enns. She sold her share in the "Oesterr.Kanter". She joined the NSDAP in 1938 and held various party functions. In 1947 she was charged with violation of paras 8,10 of the Denazification Law (Verbotsgesetz).

g. Dr. Erik Winterberger, born on 10 September 1907, businessman, residing at Graz, Mühlgasse 4. Police files contain no record of nazi activity on his part. He was however interned by the British in the Weissenstein camp from where he was released in March 1947.

h. Hans Gassels (Dr Gassell), industrialist and vice-president of the Bundeswirtschaftskammer. No further information available.

i. Wolfgang Boesch, director (Verstandsmitglied) of the [illegible]ater Bank, no further information available. Police files list one Wolfgang Boesch, born on 4 March 1909, residing in Graz, Elisabethinergasse 2, as former NSDAP member, but it is not definitely known whether this Boesch is identical with the Boesch associated with the "Oesterr. Kontor".

j. Walter Koenig, born on 28 December 1889 in Berlin, Austria [illegible] 1940, residing at Graz, Grillparzerstrasse 27. Police files list him as a NSDAP member and holder of a 1938 anschluss decoration. Walter Koenig, then a German citizen, resided in Austria already prior to 1938. He left for Germany in 1938, but returned to Austria after the German occupation. In Austria he subsequently acquired a lumber trading firm and [illegible] sawing mill in St. Ulrich a. Laussnitz which had been Jewish property. In 1945 the prosecutor at Graz preferred charges against him in this matter, but in a trial of the Graz People's Court in January 1946, he was acquitted.

6. No further information could be procured on the foreigners associated with the "Oesterr. Kontor".

7. Further investigation of the "Oesterr. Kontor" revealed that the firm transacted numerous foreign trade [illegible] deals recently and therefore does not appear to be a mere cover for other activities.